

Major social changes stymied during Congress' 97th session

By Larry Chesser
WASHINGTON (BP)—Expectations ran high among advocates of controversial causes such as tuition tax credits, public school prayer, and abortion restrictions when the 97th Congress came to town two years ago.

The mix of a new President, who promised to push these issues, with a Congress expected to be decidedly more conservative seemed to spell the last chance for legislative movement in these areas.

But in the end the causes—all pushed by the New Right—fared no better in the 97th Congress than they did in the previous one. They stirred a lot of fury and debate but brought about no significant change in the law of the land.

Based on early surveys and comments from members of the 98th Congress, which convened here Jan. 3, the social agenda of the New Right appears to have missed its best chance.

Back burner

With the 97th Congress concentrating on President Reagan's budget and tax cut from the beginning, controversial social issues were consigned to the back burner. When they finally surfaced late in the second session—mostly in the Republican-controlled Senate—they proved so divisive that the debates they sparked may well have cost them supporters.

Though numerous tuition tax credit proposals were introduced from day one of the 97th Congress, none went anywhere until President Reagan began pushing a White House version late in the second session.

With this administration push, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., held together a shaky coalition of tuition tax credit

supporters long enough to have a highly-modified and watered-down version of the Reagan proposal out of committee; but it never was considered on the Senate floor.

Treasury drain

Opponents of the measure charged that tuition tax credits would be a drain on the federal treasury in a time of mounting budget deficits and that they violate the First Amendment's ban on a government establishment of religion. In addition, proponents were divided over how tough to make the bill's anti-discrimination provisions against schools that discriminate on the basis of race.

Proponents of state-sponsored prayer in public schools moved on two fronts during the 97th Congress. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., pushed legislation to strip the Supreme Court and lower federal courts of jurisdiction of school prayer cases.

Although no hearings were held on his court-stripping proposal, Helms offered it as an amendment to a debt ceiling bill last September. But the measure failed.

Early last summer, President Reagan fulfilled a campaign promise by proposing a constitutional amendment on school prayer; but it also failed to move.

The Senate Judiciary Committee held three hearings on the Reagan proposal; but with time waning in the session, committee chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., told the President he would reintroduce the measure in the 98th Congress, indicating it wouldn't move in the 97th.

Reagan's prayer amendment met with even less success in the House of Representatives, where Judiciary Committee leaders kept it bottled up;

and an effort to discharge the measure from the committee produced fewer than 60 of the necessary 218 signatures to bring it to the floor for a vote.

Abortion was a similar story in the 97th Congress with anti-abortion forces divided over which legislation to push. Some favored a Helms proposal, a human life bill which would have declared that life begins at conception and would have barred federal courts and the Supreme Court from striking down anti-abortion legislation.

Early consideration

Others supported a constitutional amendment by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, which would have given Congress and the states authority to restrict or ban abortions. Senate Judiciary subcommittees cleared both proposals, but only the Hatch amendment passed the full Judiciary Committee. But Hatch withheld it from full Senate consideration in exchange for commitment for early consideration in the next Congress.

One conservative cause—a court-curbing amendment designed to end busing—was attached to a Justice Department authorization bill in the Senate but died in the House Judiciary Committee. The House did attach an anti-busing rider of its own to a regular appropriations measure for the Justice Department, but it was deleted from the stop-gap funding bill Congress eventually passed for that agency.

Congress cleared one piece of civil rights legislation which sparked heated debate—a 25-year extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The extension applied to the preclearance section of the act which requires nine states and portions of 13 others to get

Justice Department approval before making any voting law or policy changes.

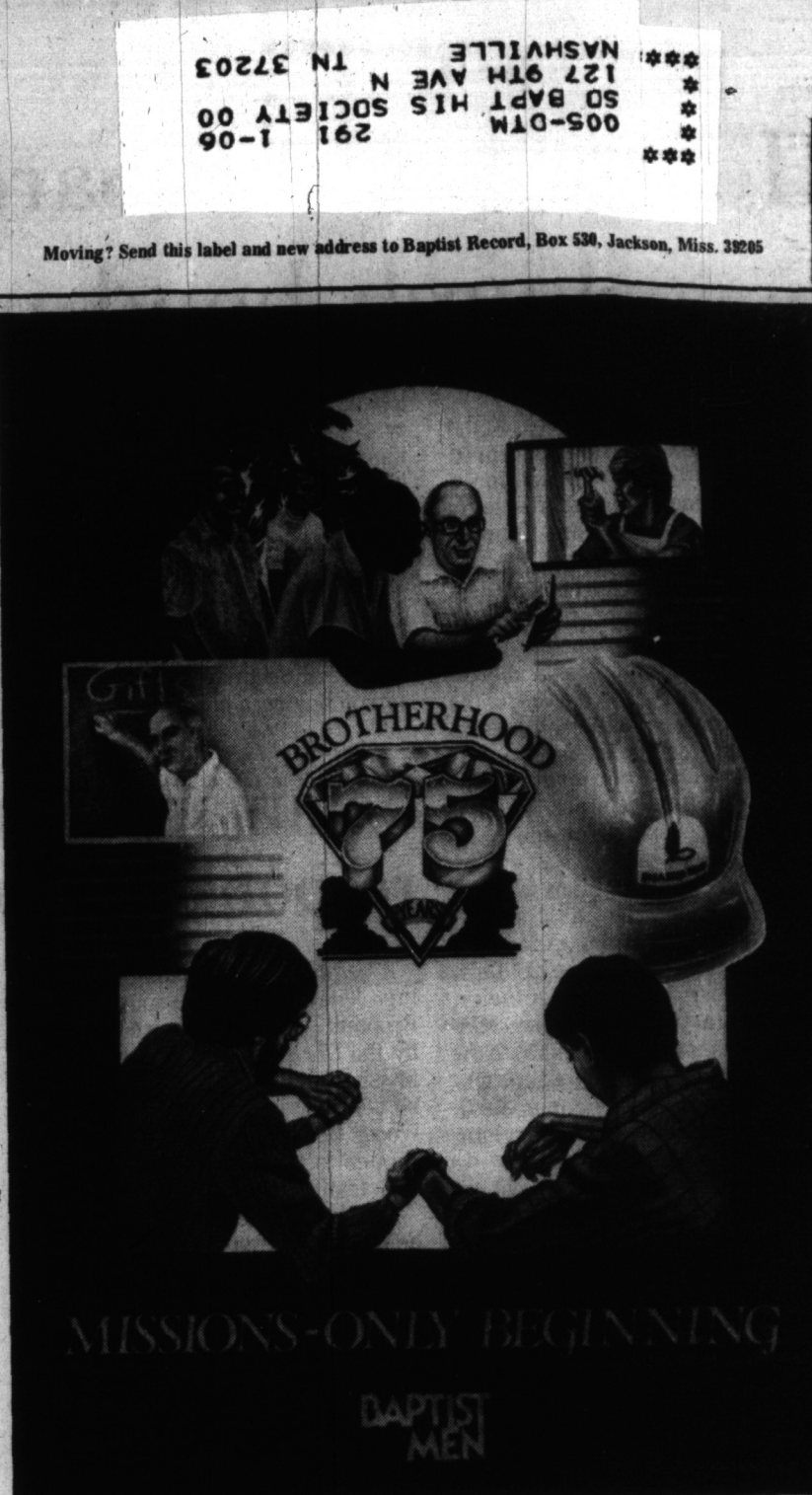
Tax laws

The 97th Congress also made several tax law changes affecting churches and charitable religious organizations. The large tax cut passed during the first year of the Reagan administration liberalized both the amount and scope of foreign earned income which Americans abroad—including missionaries—can exclude from U.S. taxes. This change was urged by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board. The new law also reduced the "marriage penalty tax" to prevent married couples with two incomes from being taxed at a higher rate than two single persons with income identical to those of the married couple. It also permits taxpayers who use the standard deduction in filing income tax returns to deduct charitable contributions.

In the tax hike passed during the second year of the Reagan administration, Congress increased the ability of churches and denominations to provide more adequate retirement plans for their ministers and lay employees.

Finally, postal rates for nonprofit mailers took a roller coaster ride during the 97th Congress. Late in the first session a shortfall in a postal subsidy appropriation led to a doubling of nonprofit rates in early 1982. But last summer Congress added some additional funding to that subsidy, bringing subsidized rates down some but not to the point where they had been. Then in the stop-gap funding measure for 1983 Congress provided funds to allow for a normal annual increase in preferred rates.

(Chesser writes for the Baptist Joint Committee.)



Baptist Men's Day

Sunday, January 23, is the climax of a year long celebration of 75 years of men's mission work in the Southern Baptist Convention. Since 1907 the work has grown into nearly a quarter million Baptist men involved in missions.

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Woman's Missionary Union plans March convention

With the theme "ACCOUNTABLE!" used as the basis for each session, the 104th annual meeting of Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union is scheduled to meet at First Baptist Church, Vicksburg, Mar. 21-22.

The convention officially opens on Monday, March 21, at 5:30 p.m. with members of Baptist Young Women gathering for their annual banquet.

Then at 7 p.m. members and leaders of other WMU age-level organizations will join the BYWs in the first session of the convention itself. There will be additional meetings on Tuesday morning, afternoon, and evening.

Each of the four sessions will feature one phase of world missions. Foreign missions will highlight Monday evening; on Tuesday state, associational,

and home missions will be featured at the three sessions.

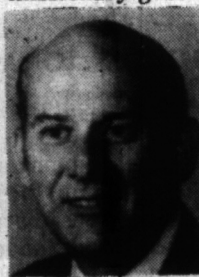
A large array of missionary guests



Fling



Dent



McDaniel

will be featured. Also, Mrs. Robert Staver, president of California Woman's Missionary Union, will be a special speaker.

Leading four devotional periods based on the theme will be Mrs. Robert Fling, of WMU, SBC. Music leader will be Major C. McDaniel, missionary to Korea. Special dramatic presentations will conclude each of the four sessions.

Members and leaders of Girls in Ac-

tion and Acteens will be able to meet the missionaries on Tuesday evening from 7-8:30 p.m. While the concluding session of the convention is taking place in the sanctuary, GAs and Ac-

teens will gather in other areas of the church building.

Presiding over the annual meeting will be Mrs. Robert P. Dent, of Holly (Continued on page 2)

Church matches jobs to Kansas unemployed

By John Hopkins

COFFEYVILLE, Kan. (BP)—Southeastern Kansas is experiencing nearly 17 percent unemployment but First Southern Baptist Church in Coffeyville is offering a solution.

Pastor D. L. Mitchell said his congregation decided to do something when "we became aware 15 families in the church were out of work. We decided to start a job swap. We simply find people who have odd jobs they want done and we put them in touch with someone who needs a job."

Mitchell said, "I see people walking around in a state of depression. People have little money, they're running out of unemployment benefits, but their family needs go on."

Two major foundries, the major employers in Coffeyville, have both closed down.

Economic indicators in the area show that for every individual laid off from one of the foundries or its supporting plants and factories, the community can expect to see another three or four persons laid off.

"We have received terrific support from the community," Mitchell said. "We want to be certain we do not jeopardize the individuals' unemployment benefits and most jobs do not involve cash payment."

Applicants sign a waiver, releasing the church from any responsibility connected with the employment of work performance.

Mitchell said the project "goes beyond helping someone find a job: It helps the unemployed person regain a feeling of self-worth, and it has shown the community that First Southern Baptist Church has a real concern for people."

Keith Hunt, manager of the local J. C. Penney store, said he heard about the program and decided "I can help myself and at the same time help

someone who needs a job." Hunt, who does not attend First Southern, requested someone to help do odd jobs on some duplexes he owns. He will pay with certificates for either food or clothes and "they don't even have to take a certificate for my store unless they want to."

Volunteers work each afternoon, answering the phone and taking applications. Peggy Carnes, charter member of the sponsoring church, said there were about 30 applicants the first day, and "now we have more jobs than we do workers."

"It's pretty hard for people to come in," said Mitchell. "They have been rejected so many times in their efforts to find work but as word gets out we will have more workers come in. It's still new, but when they find out we care and can help them, they will be in," he said.

(Hopkins edits the Kansas-Nebraska Baptist paper.)

Pastor not guilty of "criminal chiming"

Eddie Cooper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oxford, was acquitted last week in Oxford City Court after a resident charged him with disturbing the peace—with the church chiming.

The court threw out the case because of a lack of criminal intent on the part of the pastor, according to church attorney Omar Craig.

The downtown church plays chimes on the hour 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, and turned them down in December after the complaint was filed. The resident who filed, Katherine Marcella, lives a block away from the church, and was the only person to sign the complaint.

IRS to revoke ministers' double break for housing

WASHINGTON (BP)—Ministers buying their own houses will no longer be permitted the double benefit of a tax-exempt housing allowance plus tax deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes under a new Internal Revenue Service ruling.

The new ruling, set to take effect no later than June 30, 1983, disallows ministers a federal income tax deduction for any portion of mortgage interest and real estate taxes for which they have received a tax-exempt housing allowance. In cases where the housing expenses are greater than the housing allowance involved, a portion of the interest and taxes will remain deductible.

The IRS action revokes a 1962 revenue ruling which specifically permitted such deductions even though the law also entitled ministers to a housing allowance exclusion.

Based on a section of the IRS code designed to prohibit double tax benefits, the new ruling also bars veterans and other students from deducting education expenses when they have received tax-exempt veterans benefits or scholarships to pay those education costs.

For ministers, the new ruling will take effect at the end of their current contract years, or by June 30, whichever comes first.

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Church sends truckload of food to hurting area

By Michael Tutterow

ELIZABETHTON, Tenn. (BP)—In response to a Newsweek magazine article, Elizabethton's Siam Baptist Church has begun efforts to collect and send a truck load of food to residents of Hibbing, Minn., where unemployment has risen as high as 80 percent.

Hibbing, in the heart of northern Minnesota's Mesabi iron range, has been plagued by iron-ore mine shut-downs, with most furloughed miners nearing the end of their unemployment benefits, Newsweek reported.

Shafer Parker, pastor of Siam Baptist Church, said the Newsweek article prompted him to take Hibbing's plight to church members, who voted to support a relief project. Parker contacted Tom Hertel, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Hibbing to discuss possible ways Siam Baptist could help.

Hertel explained the economic picture, noting out of 44 members in his congregation, only four persons had jobs. "It's bad when people pass out from hunger in church," said Hertel.

He said the church already "pounds" (supplies) about two families a week with canned and dry goods, but admits church members "are not suffering like the community is. We keep two offering plates: one's for taking out, the other's for taking in," added Hertel.

Hertel said the two churches wanted "to use the Christmas time and spirit" to launch the food distribution plan. Parker predicted Siam Baptist and local community supporters could collect the foodstuffs and secure trans-

portation to deliver the goods by the end of January.

Hertel agreed to use Calvary Baptist facilities as a warehouse for the food, removing half the pews in the sanctuary in order to store the food.

(Continued on page 2)

Brooksville pastor's son found dead

The body of a Noxubee County pastor's son was found Jan. 8 in Pensacola near the seafood company where he was last seen seven months earlier.

Jerry Zgarba, pastor of Brooksville Baptist Church reported to the Baptist Record that the remains of his son, Frank Ivan Zgarba, 22, were found in some bushes near the rear of Maria's Seafood Inc., where the young man completed his first day of work June 4, 1982. Co-workers reported to police he left work that day, saying he would see them the next day. He was not seen alive after that. The body was identified through dental records.

His car was found several miles away on June 21, minus the battery. Cause of death had not yet been determined, but the elder Zgarba reported that police were treating the death as a homicide.

The funeral was held Jan. 15 at Brooksville Baptist Church with Leon Young conducting. Burial was in Brooksville Cemetery.

Home Mission Board launches capsules new church bond program

By Jim Newton
ATLANTA (BP)—Directors of the H.M.B. Service Corp. have approved documents putting into operation a new church bond program offered by the SBC Home Mission Board's "Broadway Plan."

"As of Jan. 11, the church bond program at the HMB is operational," said Robert H. Kilgore, director of the HMB Church Loans division and president of the H.M.B. Service Corp., the subsidiary corporation which acts as broker-dealer for the bonds.

Directors of the corporation approved an inch-thick stack of legal documents necessary for the bond program to begin.

H.M.B. Service Corp. plans to register as a broker-dealer in 30 states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Although the first bonds have not yet been issued by a local church through the "Broadway Plan" of H. M. B. Service Corp., Kilgore said there are about 20 churches now in process of applying for bonds.

Kilgore said it has taken much

longer to work through all the legal procedures to begin the bond program than he had hoped, primarily because of the "Tax Reform Act of 1982" passed by Congress to go into effect Jan. 1, 1983.

This new law prohibited issuance of "bearer bonds" payable on maturity to the "bearer," and required all churches which sell bonds to record the Social Security numbers of each person buying a bond.

Kilgore explained the new law requires bond holders and the bank which serves as trustee to report all interest income on church bonds. He cited one report indicating that prior to the new law, an estimated 23-30 percent of the interest earned by bearer bonds has not been reported to Internal Revenue Service as taxable income.

(Newton is HMB news director.)

Seminar to inspect church response to drunk driving

A seminar on "Drinking and Driving: The Church's Response to the Problem" will be sponsored, Feb. 22, by the Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Alta Woods Church, Jackson. The seminar is open to the public, and there is no registration fee.

A featured speaker for the event will be William Plymat, executive director of the American Council on Alcohol Problems, who was appointed by President Reagan as a member of the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving.

Plymat is an attorney and an active Methodist layman.

Ron Sisk, director of program development of the Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Convention, will also be featured at the seminar. Sisk's work includes the area of alcoholism and drunk driving. He will come to suggest ways in which churches can address the problem of drunk driving and assist in a positive manner with the proposed legislation to curb drunk driving in Mississippi.

Several state legislators will also be featured and will speak to the bills they have introduced to the 1983 session of the Mississippi legislature concerning drunk driving. These legislators are vitally interested in the problem and will come to share what participants and members of local congregations can do to support their efforts to remove the drinking driver from the highways of Mississippi.

The seminar is directed to all persons in the state who want to have an active part in prophetically addressing the issue of drinking and driving and the drunk driver.

Each participant of the seminar will be responsible for lunch. Additional information may be secured from the Christian Action Commission by writing Box 530, Jackson, Miss., 39205, or by calling 968-3800.

Tithing and the church

The church arose out of the heart of God as the organism for Christian growth, ministry, and world evangelization. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit took charge of the church. The early church was concerned with poverty and existence in a hostile environment. As the Holy Spirit began to lift the vision of the church, Paul and Barnabas were dedicated and sent away as missionaries. The Holy Spirit has continued to guide the church across the centuries in facing new frontiers and finding support for these mission efforts.

As mission efforts and church ministries grew, Christians were called on to provide the needed finances. The great drag on the churches today is the poor tithing situation found in the bulk of many church members. Too many of our people have been captured by the deceitfulness of riches.

From antiquity, the practice of tithing has served to help Christian people establish and keep priorities in their lives. When given in love, the tithe blesses both the giver and the receiver.

The problem is that only about 15 percent, or less, of church members give as much as a tithe. Far too many church leaders have been derelict in their duty to teach and practice tithing.

Therefore, many of our people are more concerned over the things of the world than the things of God. This situation will be corrected only when church leaders decide to plan for and call the people, all the people, back to the basics of their faith.

The Bible declares: "The tithe is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30). Malachi called the people to return to God by bringing their tithes to the house of God.

We will never successfully lead our people to the blessings of Zion as long as their faces are turned backward toward Babylon.

"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).



Church sends truckload to hurting

(Continued from page 1)

Parker admitted securing transportation posed the most difficult problem, but he remained confident. "I can't imagine that if we get the food together we won't find transportation," he said.

He added that Elizabethton churches of various denominations are interested in supporting the project, tying in with Hibbing area churches. Parker also hoped to enlist community service organizations and businesses in the project.

Parker said the church considered collecting money to send to the Hibbing area, but felt monetary contributions were "easier" than personal involvement and "would not make the same kind of impact."

He explained that church concern

for the Hibbing residents had also sparked a new concern for the Elizabethton community, where figures show 13 to 14 percent of the residents out of work. Church plans to serve Christmas dinner to 17 needy Elizabethton citizens blossomed into meals for more than 60 families—275 persons in all.



Crawford

Singles to retreat

A single adult retreat is set for Jan. 28-29 at Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson, beginning at 7 p.m., Friday, ending at 4 p.m. the next day.

Speakers for the weekend retreat will be Ann Alexander Smith, consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board's singles ministry; Dan Crawford, national consultant for singles for the Home Mission Board; and Paul Jones, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

The retreat is free, but each person is responsible for securing lodging.

Memorial leases Carroll Co. unit

HUNTINGDON, Tenn.—Carroll County, Tenn., commissioners accepted an offer by Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Jan. 10 to lease the 72-bed hospital here until a new facility is built.

Terms include leasing the hospital for three years for \$1.8 million and purchasing net assets for \$1.2 million and equipment for \$350,000.

The commissioners gave the health care system a contract to temporarily manage the hospital until leasing arrangements are completed, which should be in about 90 days.

When the new hospital is completed, money from the lease and equipment—totaling \$2.15 million—will go into an indigent care fund, the proposal stipulates, with the old building returning to the county.

William Fleming, director of marketing for Baptist Memorial's Corporate Services, says construction plans are expected to include a hospital of about 90 beds, a medical office building, and ancillary facilities adequate to accommodate up to 120 beds.

Carroll County General is the 8th hospital to affiliate with the health care system since it was established 18 months ago. The system also has management contracts with two other institutions, Trezevant Manor-Allen Morgan Nursing Center in Memphis and Golden Triangle Regional Medical Center in Columbus, Miss.

Other hospitals in the system are in Ripley, Covington and Union City, Tenn.; Booneville, Miss.; and Hardy and Corning, Ark. The three-unit Baptist Memorial in Memphis is flagship of the system.

Memorial adds Arkansas hospital

FORREST CITY, Ark.—Forrest Memorial Hospital, a 112-bed acute care facility here, officially became Baptist Memorial Hospital-Forrest City when final papers were signed Jan. 4 making the institution a member of the Memphis-based Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc.

As a condition of the lease agreement, Baptist Memorial is to build a new hospital in St. Francis County. A feasibility study to determine the best location for a new facility and the actual health care needs of St. Francis County will be started this month. a spokesman said.

Larry Walker, new administrator at BMH-Forrest City formerly was administrator of Corning (Ark.) Community Hospital, also a member of the health care system.

Other affiliates are located in Ripley, Covington and Union City, Tenn.; Hardy, Ark.; and Booneville and Columbus, Miss.

WMU plans March 21-22 convention

(Continued from page 1)

Springs, who is in her fourth year as president of Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union. Marjean Patterson is executive director of the missions organization for women, girls, and pre-school boys and girls.

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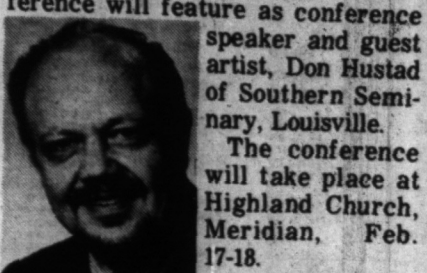
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Music meeting will feature Don Hustad as guest artist

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference will feature as conference speaker and guest artist, Don Hustad of Southern Seminary, Louisville.



The conference will take place at Highland Church, Meridian, Feb. 17-18. Registration begins at 6 p.m. with the conference banquet beginning at 6:30. Reservations for the \$4-a-plate steak dinner must be made with Franklin Denham, Highland Church,

3400 27th St., Meridian, Miss., 39301, by Feb. 14. Entertainment during the banquet will be provided by the "Joyful Sounds" of Broadmoor Church, Jackson.

The opening session begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Highland sanctuary. It will feature the Young Musicians' Choir of Carriage Hills Church, Southaven. Hustad will speak at 7:50 followed by a creative worship service led by the Highland Church Choir, Hustad, and the Church Music Department, music drama clinicians.

The Friday morning session begins at 8:30 and concludes at 12:15. The morning agenda includes sessions led

by Hustad; a business session; John Hanbery with an instrumental demonstration; and a panel discussion concerning stress, motivation, and time management led by J. T. Hanaford, Larry Black, and Maurice Flowers.

Music ministers who have served continuously for periods of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, or 50 years in Mississippi will be recognized during the conference. All qualifying instrumentalists, educators, music directors, and others serving through a church music vocation should notify J. M. Woody, 787 E. Northside Drive, Jackson, MS, 39206.

Texas, Mexico become partners

MEXICO CITY (BP)—Mexico Partnership, a three-year evangelistic effort by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, about 500 churches of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, began Jan. 1.

The first volunteer to serve in the new evangelistic partnership is Susie Ann Bobbitt, who will teach second grade at the Lincoln School in Guadalupe, Mexico.

William H. Gray, coordinator of the Partnership Missions office in the Baptist Building in Dallas, said excitement is mounting, and "ultimately Mexico Partnership should be one of the greatest evangelistic thrusts in our history."

Mexico has about 70 million people

Kelly will lead doctrinal study

The Doctrine of Biblical Authority, the new Baptist doctrine book, will be taught in four locations in the state during February and March by Earl Kelly, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The first of the four teaching conferences will be Feb. 28 at Immanuel Church, Greenwood. The three in March will be March 1 at the Baptist Building in Jackson; March 14 at First Church, Tupelo; and March 15 at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.

Each of the conferences will begin at 10 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. They are aimed at pastors, other staff members, and all who will be planning to teach the book.

This is the adult doctrine book and is the only one that will be taught at the conferences. The other age group books are Youth Affirm: The Doctrine of Biblical Authority, youth; The Bible Our Guidebook, older children; What Is The Bible?, younger children; How the Bible Helps People, older preschoolers; and Jesus Loves Me, younger preschoolers.

The doctrinal study is sponsored by the Church Training department. Suggested dates are April 18 to 22 but may be conducted at any time during the year, according to Mose Dangerfield, Church Training director.

Don Wilson has resigned as pastor of Trinity Church, Clay Association.

Enon Church, Winston County, has called Reggie Lovorn as minister of music.

Leonard Howell is new pastor of Evergreen Church, Winston County.

Noxapater Church, Winston County, has called Jerry W. Morgan as minister of music.

Richard G. Lee recently resigned the pastorate of Highland Church, Laurel, where he had served two years, to accept the pastorate of Rehoboth Baptist Church, Tucker, Ga. Before going to Highland, he had been associate pastor at Rehoboth. Lee is from Toccoa, Ga., and attended Mercer University and Southeastern Seminary. He has a doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary.

Jerry Odom has been called as pastor of the Trace Ridge Church at Ridgeland. He goes from Winter Park, Fla. Odom, who was born in Belzoni, is a graduate of Mississippi College and Southwestern Seminary. He was formerly pastor of the Ridgeland Baptist Church.

Tylertown Church has called David Smith as minister of education and activities. He is a graduate of South Jones High School and USM, and he received the M.R.E. degree from Southwestern Seminary in December. In 1974 and 1975 he was activities director for West Ellisville Church, Ellisville.

Northside Church (Greene) has called Marc Eichelberger as pastor. He is studying at New Orleans Seminary.

Love does not parade the imperfections of others or taunt men for their weaknesses. Rather love seeks to understand men—their imperfections and weaknesses.



Trinity stages model wedding

A model wedding climaxed a Church Training unit of study on marriage, at Trinity Baptist Church, Monroe Association. Marie Ware portrayed the bride, and Greg Maples the groom. Pastor Ray G. Ware discussed each part of the marriage vows, so youths would be ready to say "we do" instead of "we do?" A commitment service gave the youths "a time to turn their dating lives over to God," and adults a time to resolve "to keep Christ at the center of their homes." The pastor had baked and decorated both the bride's cake and the groom's cake. Mrs. Ray G. Ware, youth leader, said the church plans to repeat this type of service in coming years.

Missionary News

James and Charlotte Walker, missionaries to Malawi, have completed furlough and returned to the field. They may be addressed at P. O. Box 50, Salima, Malawi. She was born in Mobile, Ala., and lived in Mississippi while growing up.

Lynn Raley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Raley, missionaries to Taiwan, married Sue Conner on Dec. 18. His parents may be addressed P. O. Box 427, Taipei 100, Taiwan ROC. His mother, the former Frances Bibb, was born near Moorhead, Miss.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Williams, missionaries to Niger Republic, have completed furlough and returned to the field (address: BP 10038, Niamey, Niger Republic). She is from Columbia, Miss.

David and Gloria Glaze, missionaries to Argentina, have arrived in Costa Rica for language study (address: Apartado 100, 2350 San Francisco de Dos Rios, San Jose, Costa Rica). Son of former missionaries to Argentina, he was born in Louisville, Ky., and lived in Costa Rica and Argentina and considers Jackson, Miss., his hometown. The former Gloria Marler, daughter of missionaries to Guam, she was born in Tylertown, Miss.

Mary Frank Kirkpatrick, missionary since 1955, resigned from missionary service Dec. 31. She served in Nigeria until her transfer to Liberia in 1978. A native of Noxapater, Miss., she may be addressed at Box 94, Noxapater, Miss. 39346.

Felix and Dene Greer, missionaries to Liberia, have completed furlough and returned to the field (address: P. O. Box 1416, Monrovia, Liberia). He was born in New Orleans, and lived in Vicksburg, Clinton, and Jackson while growing up. She is from Jackson.

William and Michele Brigham, missionaries to Thailand, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Box 832, Bangkok, Thailand). He grew up in Yazoo City. She is from Collins.

Daniel and Sharon Bradley, missionaries to Kenya, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Baptist Language School, P. O. Box 52, Limuru, Kenya). He is a native of Gulfport. She was born in Gulfport, and grew up in Sauvier.

To be loved means to be consumed. To love is to give light with inexhaustible oil. To be loved is to pass away; to love is to endure.—Rainer Maria Rilke

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Communicating love

How do you communicate love in the home? Is it enough to say, "I love you?"—over-anxious.

No, that is not enough; but it should be said. Other phrases like, "You are important to us," "We are proud of you," "We are glad you belong to us," "You often are bringing us joy," "We can count on you," "We are with you"—all say something similar to "you are much loved." We begin with the babe in arms by caressing, stroking, holding, and the infant begins to feel secure, belonging to, and loved. Appropriate touching becomes a very significant way of saying "I love you."

We communicate love by sharing and giving. Early we teach our children that we give because we love. Love assumes responsibility and the parent teaches we do certain things for you out of our responsibility to you. The child, in turn, assumes responsibility in love on the basis of growing ability. Later privileges are given out

of love as trust is developed by the child being accountable when responsible.

The parent teaches commitment to the family member by example in commitment to the total well being of each other as marriage partners and to the children as well as to extended family members such as grandparents, commitment is the binding and blending factor in love. There are indeed many ways to say, "I love you." Respect for the personhood and trust in each family member becomes the bottom line from which any expression of love emerges.

Inquiries should be addressed to Intensive Care, Baptist Record, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Mission changes name to Kittiwake Church

Pass Christian Baptist Mission has changed its name to Kittiwake Baptist Church. It has not been constituted as a church, but is still a mission of First Church, Long Beach. Mission pastor, Mike Hutchinson, explains, "The name was changed for two basic reasons. First, the predominantly non-Baptist community was misunderstanding the word 'mission' in our title. They thought we were just a soup kitchen or were only working with cer-

tain ethnic groups. So we decided to drop the word 'mission'.

"Second, Kittiwake was chosen as the name by the mission anticipating a move later this year onto the old Camp Kittiwake property."

The mission's first unit will be the first construction on this property since the camp was destroyed in 1969 by Hurricane Camille. The mission church is now renting facilities at Gospel Singers Building in Pass Christian.

Instruction offered in AerobiRhythms

First Baptist Church, Jackson is sponsoring an AerobiRhythms instructors' workshop starting at 1 p.m. Friday, Jan. 21, and all day Saturday the 22nd.

Those interested in attending should contact Jim Baker, First Baptist Church, Box 1158, Jackson, Miss. 39205, 355-2911.

Kindergarten-day care clinic set

A statewide Kindergarten-Day Care Clinic will be at Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Jackson on Mar. 12. Dixie Crase, author of the new curriculum guide for two-year olds, will lead a general session after the program begins at 8:50 with a devotional by Gerald Harris, pastor at Colonial Heights. Registration begins at 8:30.

Gail Merritt, editor in the Church Administration department for week-day education materials, will lead sessions on discipline during each of four simultaneous conferences, as will Rita Sweatt of Jackson in the area of music, and Teresa Aikens, also of Jackson, in the area of art.

Other sessions during the day include work with babies and creepers, with toddlers and twos, with three-year olds, four-year olds, and five-year olds. Other sessions will be for directors and on the subject of mothers' day out programs.

Participants are encouraged to bring projects for display.

Early registration is requested. Write Leon Emery at Box 530, Jackson, Miss., 39205. Include a \$5 fee to cover cost of materials and lunch. The clinic concludes at 4 p.m.

Long range planning seminar

The long range planning seminar is set for Feb. 14-16 at the Baptist Building in Jackson. Leaders of the seminar will be Truman Brown, of the Pastoral section of the Baptist Sunday School Board, and Leon Emery, director of the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

To register, write Emery at Box 530, Jackson, Miss., 39205. A registration fee of \$40 will be charged for the first person from each church to register; \$20 for additional persons.

Draper to lead seminary revival

NEW ORLEANS—Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Draper will be guest evangelist for the annual New Orleans Seminary campus revival, Feb. 1-4.

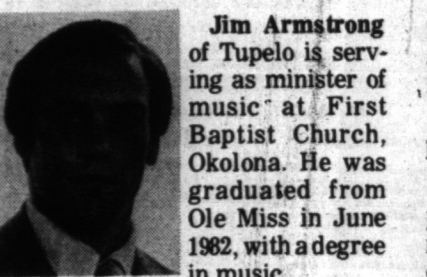
Draper is pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, near Dallas.

"During his stay in New Orleans, Draper will speak each day at 10 a.m. in Leavell Chapel and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 7 p.m. in Martin Chapel on the seminary campus. The annual revival is sponsored by the NOBTS Student Body Association and is open to the general public.

Draper will be accompanied by his wife Carol Ann, who will speak to a meeting of the seminary's Student Wives Fellowship.

Staff Changes

Len Sullivan of Tupelo has accepted the pastorate of Cato Church, Rankin County. He is a graduate of Golden Gate Seminary.



Armstrong

James D. Holland has resigned the pastorate of Brewer Baptist Church, Lee County, and has accepted these pastorate of Lakeland Baptist Church, Itawamba County.

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Danny Henderson has resigned the pastorate of Eastview Church, Laurel, to accept a pastorate in Battle Mountain, Nevada.

Pat McLellan has resigned the pastorate of Temple Church, Forest, to accept that of Goodwater Church, Magee.

Hinton V. Hardin is the new pastor at Poplar Springs (Calhoun).

Russell Naron, who has resigned as pastor of Woolmarket Church, will move to Poplarville, where he will enter full time evangelism.

Michael Memorial Church, Gulf Coast, has called Chuck Hunt as new music director. He goes there from Beacon Church, Hattiesburg.

Barton Church, George County, has called Robert Winn as minister of music and associate pastor. He and his family have moved there from Taylorsville.

A. D. Hartley has accepted the pastorate of Calvary Church, Braxton.

Wayne Myers has been called as associate pastor of First Church, D'Iberville.

David Ingram has left Highland Church, Meridian, in order to become minister of youth at Broadmoor Church, Jackson.

David D. Taylor has accepted the position at First Baptist Church, Oxford, as minister of music, education, and administration. He and his family have moved to Oxford from Winnsboro, La., where he was minister of music and education at Temple Baptist Church. Taylor is graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Seminary.

Mike Carroll is the new minister of youth at Calvary Church, Columbus.

Cedar Bluff Church, Clay County, has called Archie Chesser as minister of music.

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Mission Gifts Of Mississippi Baptist Churches Thru Convention Board

Jan. 1, 1982-Dec. 31, 1982

[illegible]

Curfew doesn't stop Surinam Baptists

PARAMARIBO, Surinam (BP)—Baptists and missionaries in Surinam are continuing normal church programs despite a 7 p.m. curfew resulting from an abortive coup attempt early in December.

In at least one case Baptists arrived at a missionary's home before the curfew for prayer services and then spent the night there.

A number of families from America and Holland have left the country. Economic uncertainties have developed, with a freeze on imports and strict control of money flowing out of the country, according to Leo Waldrop, Southern Baptist missionary press representative.

Veteran educator H. I. Hester dies

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)—H. I. Hester, 87, a pioneer Southern Baptist educator, died in his sleep Jan. 9.

Hester, born March 17, 1895, in Lyons, Ga., was on the staff of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., from 1926 to 1961, serving as professor, chairman of the Bible department, vice president and interim president. Subsequent to his retirement, Hester was vice president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., from 1961 to 1965. He was president of the Midwestern board of trustees from 1957 to 1961, during the time the theological school was established.

He had endowed a number of lectureships, including ones at Midwestern seminary, and Golden Gate seminary.

Guru takes over

ANTELOPE, Ore. (EP)—Followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh took over the government of Antelope, Ore., on January 3 when one disciple became mayor and three others were sworn in as members of the Town Council.

The shift in power was the final defeat for about 40 longtime residents who did not want their town to be taken over by the Eastern religious sect. The residents were unsuccessful in an April bid to disincorporate their town, and they failed to gain control of the Town Council in a November election.

The guru's disciples moved into Antelope nearly two years ago and bought the 64,000-acre Muddy Ranch north of town. The 700 sect members now outnumber the other residents in Antelope nearly 2-to-1.

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(V20700)

Lauderdale men to hear of Parchman

The Parchman prison ministry will be emphasized at a Brotherhood meeting on Thursday night, Jan. 20, at First Baptist Church, Meridian, beginning at 7 o'clock.

Granville Watson, director of missions, Sunflower County, where Parchman Prison is located, will speak. A. C. Johnson, Lauderdale Brotherhood director, will preside.

Lottie Moon reports

Crowder (Quitman) has topped last year's Lottie Moon giving by \$2,063. Last year's Lottie Moon giving was \$3,204 and this year's is \$5,287, the most ever, reports C. A. Southerland, minister of music and youth. David Lee is pastor.

One Sunday, Dec. 19, Central Baptist Church (Tishomingo Association) received its Lottie Moon Foreign Missions Offering. A goal of \$2500.00 had been set. When the tally was made, a total of \$3605.62 had been given. Pat Moore is WMU director.

Names In The News...

Evangelist Gary Bowlin and his family have moved to Brandon, from Jackson. Their new address is 119 Tiffany Drive, Brandon, Miss. 39042 telephone. 825-1043).

Perry Neal, former pastor of First Baptist Church, Bay St. Louis, and former associate minister of First, Biloxi, entered his ninth year in the ministry of full-time evangelism Jan. 1. During the past eight years he has preached in over 259 revivals. Perry, a graduate of Samford University and New Orleans Seminary, may be contacted at 4418 Wares Ferry Road, Montgomery, Ala., 36109 (phone 05/279-8710 or 264-4244 or 272-0762).

Jerry W. Stevens, director of missions, Winston County, will teach January Bible Study for two churches in Montana this month. He will teach at Calvary Baptist Church, Helena, Mont., Jan. 23-26 and at Gardiner, Mont., Jan. 27-30.

Joe Gordy and Billy Browning were ordained Dec. 26 as deacons at Temple Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Harry L. Lucenay, pastor.

Joe Loving was ordained to the gospel ministry on Dec. 26, at First Baptist Church, Richland. The charge to the church was delivered by Joe Stovall. The charge to the candidate was given by Mel C. Craft, pastor, First, Richland. Loving has assumed the pastorate of Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church, Gordon, Ala.

Wiggins Baptist Church, Carthage, honored its pastor, Carlton Jones, on Dec. 12 with a surprise "Pastor Appreciation Night."

Jones was presented with a plaque expressing appreciation for 12 years of faithful service. After a program denoting the progress of the church, Jones and his wife were given an "old-fashioned pounding."

Moselle Memorial Baptist Church, Moselle, was the setting of a surprise reception on Dec. 26 honoring the pastor, Garland Eaves, and his wife on their silver wedding anniversary. A silver tray was presented to them from the church. The couple got married Dec. 20, 1957, while students at Clarke College. They and their three children have been living in Moselle four years.

Dale Sauls was ordained to the gospel ministry on Jan. 9 at First Baptist Church, Richland. Mel C. Craft, pastor, gave the charge to the church. Farris Smith, pastor of First Church, Magnolia preached the charge to the candidate. Sauls is an M.R.E. student at New Orleans Seminary and anticipates graduating in May, 1983. He has served as ministry of education at First, Richland, since May, 1981.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Bill Bangham, associate editor of World Mission Journal, became associate director of the Brotherhood Commission's Baptist Men's Department Jan. 1. He will concentrate on missions curriculum for Baptist Men and will assist in national, regional, state and associational Baptist Men training efforts. Bangham is a graduate of Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa, and took post graduate work in human development and interdisciplinary studies at George Washington University and the University of Maryland.

Just for the Record



The youth of Central Baptist Church, Golden, (Tishomingo), presented the senior adults with an "appreciation banquet" on Nov. 11. The meal, the serving, the program, and the entertainment were all prepared and provided by the youth. Fifty four were present.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Shook, at center above, were elected as "Mr. and Mrs. Young-at-Heart." Gordon Sansing of Meridian was the guest speaker. Ralph Culp is pastor.



ROYAL AMBASSADORS OF POPLAR SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH, SIMPSON COUNTY, recently coordinated a drive to collect money for world hunger. The boys presented a check for \$834.00 to the pastor, Earl May, designated for world hunger. They made "hunger cans" and gave to church members, to place their offerings in, for world hunger. These same RAs held a father-son banquet during RA week. Recognition awards were given. Willie Johns is RA director.



STUDENTS of the JONES COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE BSU took eight children to Sears and dressed them at Christmas. After the shopping trip they were taken back to the BSU center for hamburgers and surprise gifts—dolls for the girls and trucks/cars for the boys.

"Jesus is alive and well!" was the message proclaimed at Late Nite Extra by over 500 youths at Paul Truitt Memorial Baptist Church, Pearl, Sunday evening, Jan. 9. These youths were from 20 Southern Baptist churches across Rankin County. They came to watch a drama on "John the Baptist," presented by Stan Tucker. Mark Dearman is minister of youth at Paul Truitt.



Raising money for summer missions is high on the list of priorities at the Jones County Junior College BSU. Director John F. Sumner, Jr. and students prepared exams packages which were sold to parents to be delivered to their student during exam week. The packages included fruit, candy, gum, inspirational booklets, and notes of encouragement from the parent and Sumner. "This was a definite success and moral booster for each student who received one," said Sumner.



"Sonshine," 11-member puppet team of Calvary Baptist church (Lamar), presented its Christmas show "The Birthday Party" (musical journey through a magical world filled with gifts for the King) at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, Jackson. Hospital puppet therapist, Diana M. Chiles, took the team on a tour of the hospital where she demonstrated her work with children. Team members include: Sherri Downing, Anita Freeman, Jerri Hill, Tony Legg, Karen McMahon, Tonya Osborn, Kevin Traylor, Tammy Norton, Dottie McCray, Linda Loftin, and Lane Dunaway. The team is directed by Mark Russell and Crystal McMahon.



MRS. KATHERINE RAWLS, left, has completed 15 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School at Shady Grove Baptist Church, Bogue Chitto. Her pastor, Charlie Seale, right, recently presented her an attendance pin.

Nicholson members brought Lottie Moon gifts all year

What do a jar, a large black pot, and Lottie Moon have in common? First Baptist Church, Nicholson, has grouped them together to receive the largest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in the church's history.

This record started in early 1982 through the inspiration of Mrs. Doris Chermie.

"Doris came to me in January," stated Pastor Tom Hollowell, "and said she had an idea how to raise money for Lottie Moon. She suggested that all of us get a jar, discipline ourselves, and deposit 10¢ per day for the entire year for Lottie Moon."

Later the pastor worked through the WMU to have them approve this as a year-long project. They distributed 52 jars to church members who wanted them. Although several people didn't follow through with their commitment, others gave to Lottie Moon for the first time.

"I was greatly impressed with the participation of the children," said Hollowell. "For the first time, they really felt they had contributed something to foreign missions. And I'm convinced that it was the giving of those who had never given before that caused us to exceed our goal."

The goal for 1982 was \$850.80, about

\$30.00 more than given in 1981. As the jars were emptied into the big black pot each Sunday, it was evident that the goal would be broken. After the offering was counted the third week in December, the church had collected \$1,007.00. The total amount given was \$1,042.50.



Left to right: Mrs. Elaine Jackson, Lottie Moon Offering project chairperson; Mrs. Doris Chermie, the one who introduced the project, and Tom Hollowell, Nicholson pastor. Not pictured is Mrs. Azoline Smith, WMU director, FBC, Nicholson.

Devotional

Blessed peacemaker

By Paul Griffin Jones, II
executive director, Christian Action Commission
Mississippi Baptist Convention

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9).

The emphasis on peace and peacemaking is frequently found in the teaching of Jesus. It is not surprising that the concept of peace has become a central theme of the Christian faith. In a later verse, Christ would admonish all who would follow him to "love your enemies and pray for those who use and attack you" (Matt. 5:44). The emphasis in Matthew 5:9 is on peacemaking, that is, on the few who would intentionally set about to be creators and facilitators of peace. Jesus made peace. He shaped and fashioned it from the very life he would sacrifice. He brought peace by bringing reconciliation between men, and groups, and God.

Basic to any understanding of peacemaking is the demand of witness that calls forth reconciliation. Indeed, there can be no peace until men are reconciled with God. As G. A. Buttrick would remind us, "it abstains from provocation, moves with gentleness, and pleads in love." Indeed, as peacemakers, we have to be given the "ministry of reconciliation."

The peacemaker also has the task of prevention of the cause of conflict, alienation and brokenness. If it is the hungry masses whose pangs spur them to war, the peacemaker must strive to banish undeserved poverty. If greed or pride or superiority drives nation to strive with nation, the peacemakers must become prophets and work to eliminate these postures of alienation. If insecurity and ignorance make a man factious in home and in society, the peacemaker affirms the responsibility of society to address those needs and work to solve them.

The work of the peacemaker is always that of reconciliation. His first task is to reconcile men with God. His second task is to reconcile man to man. The true evangelist is indeed the best peacemaker. And this is the style of life of our Lord whom the prophet Isaiah called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Bible Book

Freedom through Christ

By Joe H. Tuten, pastor,
Calvary, Jackson
Romans 6:1-7:25

It is helpful in studying a Sunday School lesson to keep the larger unit of study in mind. The present unit is "God's Plan for Dealing with Sin," based on Romans 3:21-8:39. This week's lesson is the third one within that unit. We have studied "Justified by Faith" (Romans 3:21-4:25) and "Benefits Through Christ's Death" (Romans 5:1-21). Now we are studying "Freedom Through Christ" (Romans 6:1-7:25). Each individual lesson should be seen as related to the unit, namely, "God's Plan for Dealing with Sin."

Freed to new life (6:1-14)

In preparation for your study of this lesson, through your imagination, go with Paul to the synagogue in Corinth. Listen as Paul preaches to this Jewish congregation that justification does not come through keeping the law of Moses or practicing circumcision, but that it comes only through the grace of God. Listen, then, as a deeply offended Jewish man begins a tirade against Paul and argues with great emotion that what Paul is preaching (justification by grace, without works) leads to more evil.

Now, read the scripture carefully and notice that Paul is arguing with such an imaginary opponent. He is debating the Jewish mindset. Some were slandering Paul (3:8). They were caricaturing his doctrine of justification by divine grace and saying we ought to sin more so God would have a better chance of showing off his grace (6:1).

Paul's reaction was, "Ridiculous! Absolutely not" (6:2). He said the very nature of salvation involves purification (6:3-4). Salvation involves and includes sanctification, a setting apart of life to God and a setting apart of life FROM the God-less world or society. When as a sinner we come to the cross we come to an experience which involves not only the death of the Son of God but our own death to sin as a way of life (6:6). We are freed (delivered) from sin (6:7). We are freed to a new life (6:13). It is a work of grace (6:14).

Freed to serve God (6:15-23)

Paul continues his diatribe with his imaginary opponent (6:15). Before we were justified by God's loving grace, we were servants of sin (6:17). But we have been delivered from that slave relationship to sin, and now we graciously have been brought into a slave relationship to righteousness (6:18).

There is no middle ground. We have been delivered from a tyrant and given a new master. We are free to serve God. Our life produces a new kind of fruit (6:22). It is God's gift through Christ (6:23).

Freed from the law (7:1-14)

Paul used the law of marriage as an illustration of the law of Moses (7:1-4). It was Paul's analogy, not ours. If we push the analogy farther than Paul applied it, we get into problems and may do violence to other scriptures. Again, it was Paul's analogy. Let him handle it his way. His essence of the analogy is found in verse four. We died to the law through Christ and, thereby, are freed from the law (6:14). Through uniting our life with the living Christ we are free to produce fruit to God (6:14).

Paul's experience with the law (7:7-12)

Here is Paul's imaginary opponent again (7:7). Since through Christ we are dead to the law, and the law is something from which we are glad to be freed, does that mean the law was evil? Did it serve a bad purpose (7:7) or a good purpose (7:12)? Paul draws upon his own experience to argue that the law was holy, just, and good (7:12). The law made him conscious of his sin (7:12). However, sin, by its subtlety (Genesis 3:1), had used the law against Paul's wellbeing to bring an accumulation of evil into his life (7:8).

Paul's conflict with sin (7:13-23)

The imaginary opponent is still there (7:13). Did the law, which was good, bring spiritual death to Paul? Utterly ridiculous! Sin, not the law, created all the problems in Paul's life and ours. Paul waged a long and painful warfare with sin (7:15-21). Inwardly he delighted in the law of God (7:22), but sin held him captive (7:23).

The way to freedom (7:24-25)

Paul could not free himself. He cried out for help (7:24). He had to be delivered. Jesus Christ delivered him (7:25). The warfare was not over, because sin does not give up. But there was a new freedom and a new life. Thank God!

Westwood will dedicate building

Westwood Church, Meridian, has completed a 3,100-square-foot fellowship hall and kitchen, which will be dedicated Jan. 30, in a special service. Jan. 30 will also be set aside as homecoming day and high attendance day, according to W. Buford Usry, pastor.

Uniform

Teaching about lostness

By John G. Armistead, pastor,
Calvary, Tupelo
Luke 15:11-24

It has often been said that the best part of going away on a trip is coming home. There's nothing quite like my own home and my own bed. There we feel safe and comfortable. We can pull off our shoes and relax. In this parable Jesus talks of a homecoming. Being away from home was to be "dead" and "lost." Coming home is to be "alive" and "found."

Jesus' critics were shocked because he was associating with "sinners" (15:2). In answer to their attitude he told three parables. Each parable emphasizes the joy one has in finding something which he had lost. Jesus is emphasizing God's joy in finding sinners who were lost. The Pharisees and scribes to whom he is telling these stories are like the elder brother who refuses to share the father's joy in the lost son come home. In this third parable in particular Jesus tells us some important things about the loving Father and about lostness.

I. The Father gives us freedom (15:11,12).

The boy in the story yearns to leave home and asks his father for his share of the estate, which would have amounted to one third. The elder brother would have gotten the rest. The father did not have to give it to him. It was probably a great deal of trouble in that the assets would be in land and livestock and require liquidation. The father does not even have to let him go! He is still under his authority. But the father gives him freedom of choice.

So it is that the heavenly Father gives us freedom of choice. He did not make us robots. We can choose how we want to live. He has even given us the freedom to leave him if we like. Of course, leaving him is disastrous for us, as it was for the boy. Being apart from him is "wasteful." Being apart from him is indeed to be in the "far country" of our souls, the land of spiritual famine. Yet the Father gives us our choice—to be with him or away from him.

II. The Father blesses those who are under his authority (15:13-19).

Having entirely gone through his inheritance in "riotous living" and finding the land suffering from economic depression, the young man found a job working for a Gentile keeping care of pigs. (Jesus' proper Jewish audience would have been sick to their stomachs at this point in the story.) It is then he remembers how even the hired hands on his father's farm have plenty to eat

and here he is envying the pigs their food! His belly speaks to him and he comes to his senses. He understands he has sinned against God and his father. He resolves to return home, apologize to his father, and ask for a job as one of those hired hands.

Even the least in the heavenly Father's house have spiritual food enough and to spare. There is more emotional stability and happiness in the life of the least of the saints than in the greatest of those wandering in the far country of the spirit. The Father takes good care of those who have placed themselves under his authority.

III. The Father is compassionate and forgiving (15:20)

Here is the beautiful climax to the story. The loving Father has been waiting and watching, longing for his wayward boy. He immediately recognizes the ragged figure stumbling towards the house, runs in eagerness to him, and smothering away the boy's well-rehearsed confession in happy kisses. So is the loving Father compassionate and ready to forgive. He waits and longs for the lost soul to come home. He eagerly embraces the most filthy of us in his love and forgiveness.

IV. The Father's greatest joy is in receiving sinners (15:21-24)

The father immediately ordered the festivities to begin. The rags of poverty were stripped off and the best robe put on the boy. A ring was placed on his hand and shoes on his feet. The ring would symbolize his authority (full sonship, not a hired servant). The shoes also would honor him as a son. Slaves did not wear shoes. The calf which was being fattened for a special occasion was to be immediately prepared for the banquet. No more joyous moment would ever come.

So the heavenly Father welcomes the lost sinner coming home: the robe of righteousness, the ring and shoes of sonship, the joyous celebration that one who was dead is now alive. One who was lost was now found. Such is the heart of God when any lost child of his comes to himself and returns home.

Off the Record

"Darling," scolded the mother, "you shouldn't always keep everything for yourself. I have told you before that you should let your brother play with your toys half of the time." "I've been doing it. I take the sled going downhill and he takes it going up."

Life and Work

God's Word and will

By Beverly V. Tinnin, pastor, First,
Meridian
Matthew 5:17-19; 7:21; 12:1-13, 46-50;
21:28-32

One of the great stories in the Bible concerns the early days of King Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22:8). He made a covenant with the Lord to rectify the errors of his father Amon. He ordered the priests to clean the filth of the centuries from out of the temple in order that it would once more be a fit place in which to worship God.

As the operation clean-up was in progress, a book was found. It was a book so important that a national revival was instituted on the basis of it. It was a book of the law and his obedience to its teaching ushered in a golden era, though brief, in terms of the relationship of the people to God.

Now comes Jesus who far from rejecting the teachings of scripture places his stamp of approval upon them.

The law and the prophets (5:18-19)

The Jews of Jesus' day divided the Bible into three parts, the first being "the Pentateuch," or "the five books of law." The second division was generally thought to be less important but of great and lasting value. They called those books "the Prophets." We ordinarily divide this category of books into three sections. They are history, major prophets, and minor prophets. The third grouping of books was known to the Jews as "the Writing." These were not recognized as canonical for many centuries but were later incorporated into the Scripture.

For Jesus, all scripture was vital. He cut his teeth upon the study of them and it is apparent that he was well-versed, not only in the knowledge of them but in understanding them as well.

He saw the written word as a record of the self-revelation of the Father. God had progressively revealed himself to men and the Scripture was the record of his so doing. From the time he called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees and made a covenant with him it was apparent he wanted people to understand him and intertwined in the covenant relationship was the mandate to Israel to be a nation of priests. That is, they were to go unto God and learn of him, then go out to "the nations" and share their insights with them. Of course, Israel totally failed in this part of the covenant.

God continued revealing himself. To Moses he was "law giver" who expected moral behavior on the part of his people. To David he showed himself to be the great "friend." To Hosea he revealed his undying devotion, even

to his unfaithful "lover."

The final word of God's self-revelation would be spoken by the Son as in his life, death, and resurrection, God would be seen as love. He would exemplify love that would go to any extreme to redeem people. Thus did he not only keep the law and the prophets, but he fulfilled their teachings.

More of the Sabbath controversy (12:1-8)

Perhaps the disciples and the Lord had camped out the night before and, having no food with them, were hungry. A cornfield offered a solution to the problem, so they pulled the ears and ate to their satisfaction. This, of course, represented desecration of the oral tradition concerning Sabbath observance. Jesus always put human needs above keeping of legalistic rules, as in the synagogue when a trap was baited with a man who had a withered hand. It made no difference that the day was the Sabbath.

He later said, "Should I do good or evil on the Sabbath? If I can help a person, but fail to do so, then I do evil." The Pharisees could not answer his logic then, nor can they in the lesson.

He gave the example of David, who broke the rules in feeding his hungry men shewbread from the temple. They dared not to condemn the actions of great King David. He then pointed out that the priests worked on the Sabbath when they carried out rituals in the temple. He concluded that the Sabbath was a gift of God designed to meet the needs of men. It was not intended to put people in a strait jacket.

Actions, not words (21:28-31)

In this wonderful parable Jesus makes the point that what matters to God is not so much what we say as what we do. He did not praise the sullen refusal of the son. It would have been far better for him both to agree and to do what he was asked. But words, however respectful, can never substitute for obedience. To do good is a thousand times to be preferred to words of endurance and praise.

He concludes with the statement that the out and out sinner who knows his condition is wrong has a much better chance of entering the kingdom than the self-righteous one who mouths pious platitudes and has deluded people but not God.

Revival dates

Shady Grove, Bogue Chitto: Jan. 28-30; laymen's revival, with all services conducted by men of the church; Charlie Seale, pastor.